

The University of Chicago

THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY IN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY
SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH HISTORY
1932

By
GERALD BREEN SWITZER

Private Edition, Distributed by
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CHAPTER V

CHURCH AND PARLIAMENT

Conciliar Construction

The attempt of the Church of England in our century to gain spiritual independence by creating a system of Church Courts culminating in a National Assembly is of too recent memory and too widely known to require lengthy recording.

In Chapter II the long struggle for the resuscitation of the active powers of Convocation ending successfully in 1852 in the province of Canterbury and in 1861 in York has been traced. In Chapter III the increasing demand for the right to reform the constitution of Convocation issuing favourably in the Convocations of the Clergy Measure of 1920¹ has been noted.² Before 1851 diocesan synods had long been in abeyance. In that year Bishop Philpotts of Exeter held one, and twenty years later a synod of the diocese of Lincoln was called. Since that time they have been convened from time to time in other dioceses, but more general interest and influence has centred in diocesan conferences comprising both clergy and laity under Presidency of a Bishop and held in every

¹10 & 11 Geo. V. Complete Statutes of England, VI, 72.

²Chapters II and III here referred to are to be found only in the complete dissertation, on file in the University of Chicago Libraries.

diocese. Having of course no statutory powers, they nevertheless have been influential in shaping Church opinion and politics. In 1870 Committees were appointed by the provincial synods to consider the wisdom of creating Houses of Laity. But the matter was delayed fifteen years because of the fear of the clergy that it would be unwise to have men unacquainted with theology weighing questions of faith and doctrine intruding on sacred ground. Finally, in 1885, with a proviso declaring the right of Convocation to pronounce finally for the province, the Synod of Canterbury agreed upon the formation of a House of Laity whose membership should comprise lay communicants, elected by the lay members of the diocesan conferences, and ten nominated by the Archbishop, with consultative and deliberative powers, but with right only to discuss, not to define or interpret matters of faith and doctrine. Six years later a similar House of Laity was created for the province of York. Although possessed of no constitutional status, the indirect influence of the Houses of Laity has been strongly felt by the provincial synods, and indeed by Parliament in the case of the Church Discipline Act of 1892, and the Benefices Act of 1898. The pressure for complete self-government in the Church increased rapidly. In 1895 a non-party Church Reform League "united on the principle of the spiritual liberty of the Church

of England"¹ was organised to press for that objective. In the closing years of the 19th century and the opening years of the 20th century the right to reform the constitution of Convocation was again and again under discussion in Convocation, but applications to the Crown for the privilege were unavailing.² The question of the position of laity in a true Church was an oft-recurring theme.³ On Tuesday, April 20, 1902, the Bishop of Salisbury presented to the Upper House the lengthy report of a joint committee on "the position of the laity with reference to legislation in matters ecclesiastical, elections of Church officers, and judicial functions in the early Church and under the constitution of the Church of England."⁴ A bulky report, containing five chapters and a conclusion, it was subsequently presented to the Lower House.⁵ The report advised in part: "That it is desirable that a National Council should be formed fully representing the clergy and laity of the Church of England."⁶

¹This clause is part of a caption which appears on the front page of each issue of "The Chronicle of the Church Reform League." In 1929 the League united with the Incorporated Free & Open Church Association to form the Church Self-Government League.

²For a painstaking account of the legal position in the matter see Dr. Wm. Stubbs "On Convocation," London, 1917, especially the address before Convocation in 1898, p. 43 ff.

³"Chronicle of Convocation," vol. Jan. 28, 1902 to July 10, 1903, pp. 41, 112, 135, 199, 307, 328, 336.

⁴p. 135.

⁵For Report see "Report on Position of Laity, no. 367," London, 1902.

⁶Ibid., p. 65.

There is no need to rehearse the lengthy discussions in successive sessions of both Houses on the report. On July 9 and 10, 1903 a joint meeting of the members of Convocation and the Houses of Laymen passed resolutions which read in part:

1. That it is desirable to make provision for the calling together of a Representative Council consisting of clergy and laity of the Provinces of Canterbury and York.
2. That the question of obtaining legal constitution and authority for such a Council be reserved for consideration until after the Council has upon a voluntary basis, come into working order.¹

Further provisions favoured reform to permit the assembling together of both Convocations, the continuance at least temporarily, of separate Houses of Laymen, and advised that the new Council comprise three Houses, the first consisting of Members of the Upper Houses of Canterbury and York, the second of the clergy of the two Lower Houses, the third of the members of the two Lay Houses; that the acceptance by each House sitting separately be necessary to constitute an act of the whole body and that with some exceptions the lay electors and representatives should be adult male communicants of the Church of England. It advised the appointment of a Committee "to prepare a scheme in further detail."² The Committee met and drew up a scheme to give effect to the resolutions of the

¹The Resolutions are appended to The Chronicle of Convocation for Sessions of Feb. 3, 4, 15, 1904, p. 2 f.

²Ibid., clause 8, p. 3.

Joint Meeting. It named the new body "The Representative Church Council," left the time and place of convention and the agenda of the first meeting to the Archbishops' discretion, and made further suggestions concerning business procedure and election methods. The Provisions and the Scheme were received and endorsed by the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation with the proviso "that the Archbishops summon the first meeting of the new Council in July 1904 if Parliament be then in Session."¹

At the sittings of the newly formed Representative Church Council on November 22, 23 and 24, 1905, a Constitution, Standing Orders, and a scheme for the Representation of the Laity were duly adopted,² embodying in the main the provisions of the joint Committee and Scheme of 1904 for three houses of Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, and the joint Presidency of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and in addition a lengthy

¹The Scheme & Acceptance are also appended to "Chronicle of Convocation" as above, pp. 4 & 7.

²"Constitution Standing Orders & Scheme for the Representation of Laity," London, 1905. See also "Report of Proceedings of the Representative Church Council," Session Nov. 22, 23 & 24, 1905, London, 1905. It was in the debate of Nov. 22 that Canon Henson objected to a proposed clause, "Nothing in this constitution nor in any proceeding of the Council shall interfere with the exercise by the Episcopate of the powers and functions inherent in them," on the ground "that the resolution as it stood took the theory which was commonly known as Apostolic Succession out of the Category of 'pious opinions', and for the first time elevated it into the position of an essential belief." Proceedings, p. 14.

series of special provisions governing the method of election, the rules of debate, the personnel of the Standing Committee and the Representation of the Laity. The privilege of voting for lay representatives was extended to "qualified persons of the female sex."¹ Election procedure through the years has proved somewhat baffling, revealing as it has the vast discrepancy between the number of votes cast for the secular courts of the nation and for the courts of the National Church.

As the resolution of the joint committee of 1904 definitely stated,² the new Council was founded on a purely voluntary basis without legal constitution or authority, but the provision concerned definitely implied that once it had "come into working order" the question of statutory powers might be investigated. The need was extremely acute. Parliament was too busy for ecclesiastical legislation. It had neither leisure, taste, nor fitness for the task. Out of 217 ecclesiastical Bills introduced into the House of Commons between the years 1888 and 1913, only 33 were passed, 183 were dropped, and one was negatived. The need for efficient and duly empowered Courts in the National Church was appalling. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of England had quadrupled. All this period the Church had been fettered.

¹Ibid., p. 11.

²Supra.

On America's gala day, July 4, 1913, commemorative of civic liberty, the Representative Church Council in England in words destined to be repeated again and again, took a momentous step toward ecclesiastical liberty. With one dissident it moved the following resolution:

That there is in principle no inconsistency between a national recognition of religion and the spiritual independence of the Church, and this Council requests the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consider the advisability of appointing a Committee to inquire what changes are advisable in order to secure in the relations of Church and State a fuller expression of the spiritual independence of the Church as well as of the national recognition of religion.

The Committee of twenty-six appointed by the Archbishops, comprised men of eminence and great ability. Until his death in the summer of 1914, the Right Honourable Sir William Anson, universally recognised as a foremost authority on the law and custom of the constitution, gave his talents unstintingly to the task. Among the personnel on the Committee were The Right Honourable A. J. Balfour, Lord Hugh Cecil, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Parmoor, Viscount Wolmer, the Bishops of Oxford and Liverpool, Reverend W. Temple, and others pre-eminent in civil and ecclesiastical life. Not until 1916 was the committee prepared to publish its report after meetings "on twenty-three days including two sessions of nearly a week each, held in September 1914, and September

1915, at Oxford."¹

The appearance of a volume approved² by a body claiming to safeguard effectively the power of the State and at the same time to give the National Church liberty to regulate its internal affairs was widely heralded. Even though the finality of the Report has been questioned by the appointment of a new commission following the "crisis" of 1927 and 1928, it is nevertheless a document of primary importance in the history of Church and State relationship.

Prefaced by a brief history of the relations of Church and State in England from the beginning of Christianity in Britain, which it places "about 200 A.D.,"³ it declares toward the end of the sketch:

The Prayer Book and the Articles being recognised by Statute the consent of Parliament is necessary to any change in the statements of the doctrine or form of worship of the Church of England. The same is true as to every part of the legal constitutional and administrative fabric of the Church which is at the present time regulated by law.

The Convocations do not depend on any statute for their constitution, but on custom. To alter the custom it would appear necessary to have the assent of Parliament as well as of the Convocations.

Any litigant who complains of lack of justice in Archbishops Court may appeal to the King, that is, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.⁴

¹"Report of the Archbishops Committee on Church & State," London, 1916, p. 1.

²With Reservations by Lord Parmoor, Sir Lewis T. Dibden & Mr. Douglas Eyre.

³p. 5.

⁴p. 27.

The third chapter concludes with the assertion of

Two broad facts concerning the Church: First, that Parliament has confined it in every department of its constitutional existence within statutory bars which Parliament itself alone can break or reshape, and secondly that Parliament is no longer fitted to legislate for the Church.¹

Pronouncing clearly on "The Principle of Spiritual Independence"² and the right of a society to govern itself, it cites the example of the Established Church of Scotland, and recommends as a remedy for the anomalous situation in the Church of England "the formation of a Church Council which shall have power to legislate on ecclesiastical affairs subject to constitutional safeguards."³ With evident care the authors of the Report set out a draft of the Constitution of a National Church Council, a draft of Rules for the Representation of the laity in that Council, and a draft of a Bill conferring statutory powers upon the Church Council.

Modelled largely on the existing Representative Church Council the constitution of the proposed new Council provided that it should consist of three houses, Bishops, Clergy and Laymen, and should exercise such legislative powers as might be conferred upon it by statute. Only the House of Bishops might initiate "any measure touching doctrinal formulae or the services or ceremonies of the Church";⁴ it must then "be

¹Ibid., pp. 28-30.

²Chap. IV.

³P. 40.

⁴P. 77 f.

debated and voted upon by each House separately," and finally be either accepted or rejected by the Council "in the terms finally proposed by the House of Bishops."¹ Members of the Houses of Clergy and Laymen must be elected every three years, and the Council must meet annually. A significant clause in the draft provided that every measure passed by the Church Council should be submitted to a Committee "styled the Legislative Committee" comprising members of all three Houses, and that that committee should take such action as might be authorised by statute "in order that such measure might become law."²

The draft of proposed rules for the representation of laity providing for lay representation not only in the National Council and House of Laity, but in Parochial Church Councils, Ruri-decanal, and Diocesan Conferences, is highly interesting for it utterly disregards the oft-repeated contention that all citizens of England are members of the Church of England, by limiting the franchise of the National Church to "actual lay communicant members," and in this significant respect reduces her to a purely denominational status.

The Draft of an Enabling Act conferring statutory powers upon the Church Council appended to the report outlines a rather complicated procedure for the transmission of

¹p. 78.

²Ibid.

a desired measure from the proposed National Council to His Majesty's government. It proposes the creation of a "Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council styled The Ecclesiastical Committee of the Privy Council"¹ to which must be submitted by the Legislative Committee of the National Council every measure passed by that Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. The ecclesiastical committee shall consider the measure, and if desired by either committee, discuss the provisions in conference of both. Upon due consideration the ecclesiastical Commission shall draft a Report to His Majesty advising that the Royal Assent ought or ought not to be given to it, and stating the reasons for such advice. The Ecclesiastical Committee shall not, however, submit its report to His Majesty until the Legislative Committee of the National Council signifies its desire that it should be so presented, and the Legislative Committee may withdraw a measure at any time from further consideration by the Ecclesiastical Committee.

The proposed act further recites that

(A) If the Ecclesiastical Committee shall have advised His Majesty to give His Royal assent to the measure, then unless within forty days either House of Parliament shall direct to the contrary such measure shall be presented to His Majesty and shall have the force and effect of an Act of Parliament on the Royal assent being signified thereto.

(B) If the Ecclesiastical Committee shall have advised His Majesty that the measure ought not to receive the Royal assent, no further proceeding shall be taken thereon:

Provided that if both Houses of Parliament within forty days so direct such measure shall be presented to His Majesty and on the Royal assent being signified there-¹ to shall have the force and effect of an Act of Parliament.¹

Two conclusions drawn from the report cannot be escaped. First that the members of the Committee clearly recognised the unfortunate situation into which the Church of England had come, "paralised in some directions," the report declared, "because it has not power to adjust the organisation and the rules and manuals of worship which it inherits from past centuries to the deeply changed conditions of the present day,"² second, that in spite of this frank avowal and a stern emphasis upon the principle of spiritual independence of the Church, so long as the Establishment remained they felt compelled to concede to the State "so complete and peremptory a power of veto,"³ as in the last analysis to entitle a Parliament comprised of members of all creeds and of none at all to annul utterly any measure the National Council might enact, be it ever so sacred or spiritual in character. As the Church discovered in 1927, and again in 1928, the authors of the Report had found no complete solution short of Disestablishment.

¹p. 93.

²p. 2. The italics are mine.

³p. 49.

Will the new Archbishops' Committee be able to escape the declaration of the Report of 1916:

The veto of the State need not involve the sacrifice of spiritual independence, since in the last resort, the Church may, at the cost of Disestablishment, assert its inherent rights; but we recognise that in any form of establishment the State must have power to decide whether any legislation proposed by the Church would render the continuance of State recognition undesirable or even impracticable?

Following the publication of the Report, opinion hitherto unrealised became operative in Church circles. The Church Reform League announcing its "main purpose - to secure powers of self-government for the Church"¹ was particularly active. A Church Self-Government Association sprang into being pledged "to advocate the enactment of the Plan recommended by the Archbishops' Committee, subject to any modifications that may hereafter be made in it by the Representative Church Council."² In 1917 the celebrated Life and Liberty Movement was inaugurated and furthered the movement for spiritual autonomy.

Opinion was not unanimous for the Report. Three members of the Committee itself signed with reservations. Some extreme broad Churchmen like Reverend Alfred Fawkes were uncompromising in their opposition on the ground that the whole

¹See Advertisement on flyleaf to W. E. Austin & C. Kelway, "A Popular Guide to the Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church & State," London, 1916.

²Ibid. The Association was dissolved in 1920.

scheme was a concession to a noisy but clever High Church wing. In a pamphlet with a foreword by the Bishop of Hereford Mr. Fawkes declared that the report was the culmination of an unfortunate tendency of the last decades to stress the Anglican rather than the Reformed and National side of the Church. To concede so large demands for spiritual independence as the Extreme High party urged he deemed "would be to inflict a death blow on civil and religious liberty."¹ From the composition of the Archbishops' Committee he related Liberal or Broad Churchmen were carefully excluded² and "in the present state of public opinion the elective assemblies proposed would be puppets, dancing on wires pulled by party managers in the background."³ It is imperative, he affirmed, not only on Churchmen, but on the nation as a whole to resist them, and we have a right to count upon the co-operation of those whom Dean Stanley speaks of as "the Nonconforming members and ministers of the National Church"⁴ in what is a common interest and should be a common cause. They do, and we do not, accept the voluntary principle. But this principle, as Bishop Thirlwall points out, is political not religious.⁵

¹A. Fawkes, "Church & State in England," London, 1918, p. 15.

²*Ibid.*, p. 19. See contrary opinion in Archbishop's Speech in House of Lords introducing the Enabling Bill.

³*Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴"Essays on Church & State," p. 36. A. Fawkes, p. 15.

⁵Charge 1866. Fawkes, p. 15.

Only extreme High Churchmen like Reverend William Lowndes were dissatisfied with a scheme which would grant less spiritual freedom than disestablishment.¹

Nonconformists were divided in opinion. The "Methodist Times" declared:

We invite for the proposals the generous and sympathetic consideration of Free Churchmen. The last attitude they should take up would be to adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy. Their historic fidelity to the principle of spiritual independence should make them welcome the desire of the Established Church to secure it provided that the interests and responsibilities of the nation are fully secured through Parliament.²

The Liberation League was uncompromisingly opposed. In an article in the January issue of the "Liberator" of 1916, a writer suggested that the movement for limited autonomy grew from "a desire to preserve the fact of Establishment."³ In the issue of the same month of 1917 the aim of the Archbishops' Committee and the movement to make it effective was described as "the new movement to deprive Parliament of all effective control of the Established Church."

On the 28th of November, 1917, the Representative Church Council requested the Archbishops to arrange for the appointment of a Committee of Members of the Council to prepare a Report on the Recommendations contained in the Report

¹See "The Twilight of the Establishment," London, 1917, Supra.

²July 13, 1916.

³p. 8.

of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, and if they thought it desirable to prepare a scheme to be presented to the Council at its next Meeting. The new Committee sat on eighteen days with an average attendance of about forty, and was able to present to the Council in October 1918 a scheme for a "National Assembly" based upon the Report of 1916, but somewhat altered as to the method of election and tenure of office, providing for a closer co-operation between the Houses of Clergy and Laymen, and omitting the clause stipulating that only the House of Bishops could initiate consideration of measures in the Assembly concerning doctrine and worship.¹ Early in the Spring of 1919 the Representative Church Council completed its work upon the scheme, proposing to make lay women communicants of age eligible for membership in the National Assembly and minor bodies and altering in consequence the House of Laymen to the House of Laity.

That the scheme might be placed upon a constitutional basis it was submitted to the Convocations, and in May of 1919 approved by them. In keeping with ancient custom, addresses were presented to His Majesty recommending that, subject to the authority and will of the sovereign and the Houses of Parliament, powers should be conferred upon the Church Assembly

¹See "Report of the Committee of the Representative Church Council on the Report of Archbishops' Committee on Church & State," London, 1918.

in regard to legislation touching the Church of England. On May 13, 1919, the Archbishop of Canterbury introduced into the House of Lords the widely heralded Enabling Bill, "a Bill to confer powers on the National Assembly Church of England."¹ The Bill was read and ordered to be printed. On the 3rd of June of the same year, His Grace, in a lengthy speech, moved for the Second Reading of the Bill. Cautioning the members of the House that in this Bill they were "not dealing with deeper spiritual things, doctrines of faith," or "duties of the Christian Ministry,"² but only with the "framework," he reminded them of the antiquity of the Church and of the fact that it was at present forced to handle the immensely increased responsibilities and scope of Church life in a nation whose population had multiplied again and again with machinery utterly outmoded and inadequate. He reminded their Lordships of the large "amount of time which was ungrudgingly given to the Church and its affairs"³ of old by the government but which, through sheer exigencies of time and circumstances could not be spared for hearing Church matters in this century. Deprecating any suggestion that the Church of England was merely a "branch of the Civil Service,"⁴ he urged that a

¹"Parliamentary Debates," 5th Series, vol. XXXIV, col. 607.

²Ibid., col. 975.

³Ibid., col. 977.

⁴Ibid., col. 979.

vast mass of needy legislation which could well be weighed by a National Assembly was neglected till people were saying, "Why don't you do those things without caring about the exact law; no-one is going to stop you; you had better do it, though the law does not allow it." This advice he conceived to be highly dangerous. Lauding the personnel and work of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, he disowned that the proposal he was supporting was being brought forward "because our soldiers are out of England."¹ "No form of Establishment," he declared, "can without positive absurdity leave the State to arrange liturgies and articles of faith for the spiritual society."² He urged that the Lords take the attitude of the House of Commons in 1662 comprising "an immense Puritan membership" when considering suggestions about the Prayer Book. "They declined," he informed, "to discuss these things in detail, although they asserted their right to do so."³ That is all he was asking. Under the Enabling Bill

Parliament (he urged) retains its right not only in theory but in practice. But it is admitted that there are groups of subjects on which Churchmen as such must have a voice and do the thing in their way if it is to be done properly.

He found little weight in the objections offered. He did not even think that those of the Nonconformists who were advocating Disestablishment would seriously oppose attempts to

¹Ibid., col. 987.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., col. 988.

remove defects or scandals in the Church. Nor did he think the institution of a National Assembly would reduce the National Church to the status of a sect. A Nonconformist, he declared, could "still be elected Churchwarden" and "would be fully eligible as Member of Parliament."¹ But to contend that the National Assembly "should include those who protest against our whole constitution and the whole character of the system is surely," he added, "to use a phrase I have ventured to employ, rather pedantic."² The objection that the scheme did not represent the mind of the Church as a whole he considered unfounded. Unswerving upholders of the Protestant side of the Church of England like the Bishops of Liverpool, Chelmsford and Petersborough, and laymen like Sir Edward Clarke definitely favoured it. Speaking of synods, parish groups, Convocations and the like, he avowed, "We have no body of collective Church opinion in this country that has not given an enthusiastic endorsement to the Bill." A further objection to the Bill, "that more enquiry is wanted first,"³ he conceived to be utterly unwarranted.

The opposition to the Archbishops' motion centered mainly in an unwillingness to concede to a National Church denominational suffrage. In an extended speech, Viscount Haldane moved an amendment:

¹Ibid., col. 990.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., col. 991.

That this House is unwilling, especially in the absence of independent enquiry, to assent to legislation which would exclude the greater part of the people of England from effective influence in the affairs of the National Church as established by the Constitution, and which is so framed as to enable members of that Church to pass laws that may wholly change its character without adequate supervision by Parliament.¹

The Bill, the Viscount declared, was

Based upon the theory and doctrine - that it was no title of Parliament and wrong on the part of Parliament to interfere in the slightest fashion with the affairs of the Church. Even this Bill for which of course the Church must come to Parliament is a makeshift Bill to enable the Church to get clear of Parliament.

The Lord Archbishop protested at this "that practically every right which Parliament possesses now it would possess afterwards."² Examining the Report of the Archbishops' Committee, the Viscount feared that the real aim of the Bill was not to grant mere deliverance from domestic difficulties permitting greater power of self-regulation, but something "very much wider." He was convinced that the Most Reverend Primate has "been giving the rein to a party in the Church which wanted something very much larger than the view he had presented."³ The Archbishops' Committee were seeking a breadth of liberty for which they were not willing to pay the price of Disestablishment. The reason Parliament had so little time in the Victorian era for ecclesiastical affairs compared with earlier

¹Ibid., col. 993.

²Ibid., col. 994.

³Ibid.

times was that "the Church was riven by this Tractarian movement from top to bottom and split in three sections, broad, high and low, which could not agree upon measures which were to be got through Parliament."¹ If the Bill became law, with the Archbishop's name affixed to it, he announced "he [the Archbishop] would have signed the death warrant of the principle of Establishment in this country."² In his opinion as a constitutional lawyer, not an ecclesiastic, the effect of the Bill would be "to take the effective control of the Church of the nation out of the hands of the nation at large,"³ for

With the control in the hands of an assembly that believes in the superiority of prelatical government of the Church to its government by the people at large, the result of the Bill will be to render that Church no longer the Church of the entire English nation, but the Church of a denomination of earnest minded believers in their own creed.⁴

The alleged objection to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, he declared, was not so much to the committee as such but "to the State exercising any control at all over the doctrine of the Bishops."⁵ He thought it "very fortunate for the Church of England that the Judicial Committee" had existed and exercised that jurisdiction. Otherwise in 1851 Bishop Philpott would have been free to refuse institution to Mr. Gorham

¹Ibid., col. 996.

²Ibid., col. 997.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., col. 1004.

because he did not subscribe to "a very stringent High Church view of Baptismal regeneration." But for the Gorham judgment "the Evangelicals would have been turned out of the Church."¹ Had not the Judicial Committee been empowered to act Broad Churchmen "like Stanley and Jowett" would have been "driven out." Similarly by decisions like Sheppard v. Bennett the Judicial Committee had

laid down for the benefit of High Churchmen what they might do in the shape of vestments and gestures - and had thus saved the High Church party from being forced out of the Church in large numbers.²

So far from being democratic, he averred, the proposed Assembly would leave the ultimate determination in matters of doctrine to the Bishops.³ The Bill was conferring too large jurisdiction and powers upon a body other than Parliament.

If this Bill were passed it would convert the Church from being an organisation representative of the nation at large into a denomination, and substitute the influence of the Episcopacy for public opinion.⁴

Lord Parmoor answered at length the charges of the Viscount and pleaded for a larger measure of spiritual liberty for the Church. "Has it not been one of the great causes of the magnificent Church influence of the Presbyterians in Scotland," he queried, "that they have enjoyed this great spiritual

¹Ibid., col. 1004.

²Ibid., col. 1005.

³Ibid., col. 1008.

⁴Ibid., col. 1014.

liberty?"¹

On July 1st and 2nd the debate on the Bill was resumed² at wearying length, their Lordships divided and the amendment was defeated by a vote of 130 to 33.

On July 10th the Bill passed through the Committee stage persistently opposed by Viscount Haldane, and was reported, given a third reading, and with the amendment proposed by the House of Commons approved on July 15th.

The Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on July 23rd,³ and in a short speech on November 7th⁴ Sir E. Beauchamp moved for its Second Reading. The aim of the Bill, he declared, was to remove some of the Church's fetters and to enable her to erase such scandals as the sale of advowsons, the tenure of livings, the ill location of many Church buildings.

It is impossible (he affirmed) to get a Bill through Parliament. From 1880 to 1913, two hundred and seventeen Church Bills were introduced into this House; 183 of these were never heard of again, one was negatived and thirty three were passed.⁵

¹Ibid., col. 1031.

²See "Parliamentary Debates," 5th Series, vol. XXXV, col. 3 f. The debate after resumption exceeds 150 cols. in Hansard.

³Ibid., col. 425-475.

⁴Ibid., vol. CXVIII, col. 1370.

⁵Ibid., vol. CXX, col. 1819.

He sketched in brief the procedure of the Representative Church Council, and Archbishops' Committee in preparing the matter for Parliamentary consideration and declared that "This Bill does not in any way affect the fundamental status and character of the National Church."¹ Public opinion was changing, old ecclesiastical views were altering, the men coming back from the realities of the war would have "broader vision." The Church must have machinery to meet new needs by removing some ancient barriers to freer action.

Mr. T. T. Broad moved a drastic amendment:

That while expressing the fullest sympathy with the aims of the Anglican Church for life and liberty in securing the rights of self-government and freedom from State control, but believing that these aims can best be realised by removing the Anglican Church by disestablishment and disendowment from a position of privilege, and so securing equal rights for all citizens and opportunity for true religious development this House declines to give a Second Reading to this Bill.²

The time had come, he declared, for setting all Churches of the land upon terms of equality. There was a better way than an Enabling Bill to release the fetters of the Anglican Church. Lessons had been taught by the War. After the Boer War an Education Bill had placed disabilities on Non-conformists so that in "8,000 schools no Nonconformist can attain to the highest post of teacher, and these schools are

¹Ibid., col. 1821.

²Ibid., col. 1823.

in the main supported out of public rates."¹ The Bill he thought would make vast constitutional changes and inaugurate steps difficult to retrace.

We Free Churchmen to-day (he said) can suffer no risks. We cannot afford unchallenged to allow this Bill to go through without taking ample safeguards in the interests of the people of all the Churches and for the liberties of the land.²

"You have here," he declared, a National Church that obtains from the State something like \$8,000,000 a year in tithes. It is the recognised teacher of religion and has a special status on account of that connection. The claim he asserted in the words of Sir Lewis Dibden, a Member of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, is "to give up authority which it (Parliament) has exercised ever since the Papal supremacy was abrogated."³ In vigorous language he listed the advantages of Disestablishment as doing away with injustice, clearing the way "for freer more harmonious relationships" between all the Churches and promoting deeper spiritual life. He quoted the Archbishop of Canterbury as saying:

It is not essential to a Church to be established, and it is not essential to our Church in its essence, in its spiritual power, in its Divine Grace, and in its Ministry of the Sacraments.⁴

The Bishop of London, he related, after his return from Ameri-

¹Ibid., col. 1826.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., col. 1829.

⁴Ibid., col. 1831.

ca had lauded the harmony and efficiency of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America which was disestablished. The Bishop, he declared, had said:

It was like going from a close atmosphere into a glorious large bright generous atmosphere where one escaped from the eternal wrangling of High Church and Low Church of Nonconformist and Churchman. In America and Canada they managed to work together with harmony, love, toleration and forbearance for one another, which we have not yet learned in England.¹

Mr. Broad concluded his speech with an appeal for Disestablishment emanating from the Church itself:

If the Church of England will take a step voluntarily and surrender the social status she has and all the wealth that comes to her from the State, she will then place herself on terms of perfect equality with all the Churches. She will then start a leadership, and that will be the reconstruction and building up of a stronger and a better England.²

In seconding the amendment Major Barnes reminded the House that the issue of Disestablishment had been raised aforetime in the House of Commons, and declared that the system of election to the proposed National Council was

undemocratic and resembled the method said to be adopted by Soviet Russia of excluding certain classes of the electorate. The National Assembly (he declared) is supposed to be dealing with a National Church enjoying emoluments from National sources, but those elected to it are confined to only a section of the population.³

The solution to the Church problem in his opinion was "Dises-

¹Ibid., col. 1831.

²Ibid., col. 1832.

³Ibid., col. 1836.

tablishment and Disendowment."¹

Opposing the amendment, Sir John Randles declared that the issue raised by the Bill was not Disestablishment, but a simple measure of liberty essential to the practical needs of the Church, and it would be a blessing to both Nonconformists and Churchmen. As a Nonconformist he could dare do nothing to lessen the vitality and usefulness of a branch of the "universal Catholic Church."²

Mr. G. Thorne urged the House not to proceed with the Bill as it would promote sectarian strife. He had been talking to a Churchman, he averred, who had said "As a Churchman I am opposed to it (the Bill) because I know the inevitable result must be Disestablishment."³ Consideration of the Bill, Mr. Thorne declared, should await legal advice.

Mr. James Hope supporting the Bill, expressed his utter repugnance "that any man should have the right or power in virtue of his civic status alone, to interfere with the internal affairs of a religious body to which he does not belong."⁴

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks declared that he was "an avowed Low Churchman," and while proposing to vote for the Bill, he added, "it is a vote as to which I have very grave misgivings."⁵

¹Ibid., col. 1837.

²Ibid., col. 1843.

³Ibid., col. 1845.

⁴Ibid., col. 1848.

⁵Ibid., col. 1851.

His fear was clearly that the Churchmen promoting the Bill planned more than

self-government in mundane affairs (and that) under the provisions of the Bill they did and do intend to touch the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer. I do want (he continued) on behalf of Evangelical Protestant Churchmen who are just as devoted Churchmen as any High Churchmen and just as keen and who love their Church as much as High Churchmen, to say that we are not prepared to have great alterations made in the Book of Common Prayer.¹

In supporting his contention that the purpose of the promoters was to effect alterations in the Prayer Book in deference to High Church opinion, he quoted the Archbishop's statement in the House of Lords:

I should be deceiving the House if I were to accept for a moment the proposition that we do not intend in any case to touch anything connected with rubrics of Common Prayer.²

Mr. A. Williams thought that if the Church of England was the Church of the whole nation, then it ought to be under the control of the whole nation.³ Mr. Hugh Edwards, a Welsh member, found inconsistency in a Bill refusing voting privileges for the proposed National Assembly to Nonconformists in a Church which acquiesced in Episcopal appointments by "a rooted Baptist."⁴ By the passing of the Bill he added "The Church retains the cash, but the State loses its control."

In an able speech defending the Bill, Lord Robert

¹Ibid., col. 1852.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., col. 1857.

⁴Ibid., col. 1866.

Cecil declared:

This Bill does not take away any rights or any privileges from anybody, either Nonconformist or Churchman, in the kingdom, and it leaves Parliament in exactly the position it always has been. Parliament can pass any measure it chooses affecting the Church of England after the Bill has been passed exactly as it could before.¹

Mr. Bonar Law, Speaker of the House, offered wise advice:

The important fact in my opinion is that whether you like it or not you have got to choose between allowing abuses, which everyone wishes to see removed and which have been a great drawback not only to the Church of England but to the Nation, to be removed or not to be removed. You have either got to agree to some scheme of this kind or to say that none of these abuses can be removed except by having a special Act of Parliament. That is quite impossible. The House of Commons has got to say "We will not allow these changes, which we admit ought to be made, until the Church of England is Disestablished," or it has got to say "There may be objections to this, but on the whole in the national interest we want to make the Church of England as great an instrument for good as we can and we will overlook these trivialities and allow them to be remedied."²

Several other members contributed briefly to the debate, the House divided and the amendment opposing the Bill was defeated by an overwhelming vote of 304 to 16.³

The Bill was committed to a Standing Committee, and somewhat amended, the Ecclesiastical Committee made to consist not of members of the Privy Council as suggested in the Report of the Archbishops' Committee but of fifteen members of the

¹Ibid., col. 1869.

²Ibid., col. 1879-80.

³Ibid., col. 1892.

House of Lords appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and fifteen members of the House of Commons appointed by the Speaker.

On December 5th, the Bill as amended by the Standing Committee, was read the third time and passed without division. Viscount Wolmer, who in committee and on the floor of the House had worked eagerly for the Bill, tendered his thanks to its promoters, affirming his hope that "We have now inaugurated a new era of Christian co-operation in this country."¹

On December 23rd the Royal assent was affixed and the Bill became law. The great Church which had so long laboured on with an outmoded machinery, now like Presbyterians, Methodists and many Nonconformist groups had a complete system of Church Courts, Parochial Church Councils, Ruri-decanal and Diocesan Conferences, all headed up in the National Assembly, all on a statutory and representative footing. By Easter 1920 the Electoral rolls were formed and in June of that year the First Session of the National Assembly was opened.

Parliament and the Prayer Book

In many directions the Assembly has amply proved its worth. In a regimen of regulations not requiring State approval and in a series of Bills which have received Parliamentary sanction, it has effected valuable reform. In 1925

¹"Parliamentary Debates," 5th Series, vol. CXXII, col. 866.

the Archbishop of York wrote enthusiastically:

Five years of the Assembly have seen more done in the way of Church reform than would probably have been seen in fifty years of Parliament. And the Assembly has done more than secure the passing of thirteen useful measures: it has gained a spirit of its own, yes an esprit de corps, a spirit which it is more easy for its members to feel than to describe.¹

But in one vital respect it had utterly failed. In 1927 and again in 1928 Churchmen discovered that they had failed completely to secure what the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State of 1916 accurately described as "power to adjust - the rules and manuals of worship which it (the Church) inherits from past centuries to the deeply changed conditions of the present day."² Spiritual independence and complete autonomy were wanting.

The careful and constitutional procedure for Prayer Book Revision can be traced readily. The knowledge that breaches in the law governing the conduct of Anglican Church worship were widespread led in 1904 to the appointment of a Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline "to enquire into the alleged prevalence of breaches or neglect of the law relating to the conduct of Divine Service in the Church of England." In consequence of its report in 1906 Royal letters of Business were issued to the Convocations with instructions

¹Preface to "The First Five Years of the Church Assembly, by a member of the First House of Laity," London, 1925.

²p. 2.

to revise the Prayer Book. In 1920 the answers of Convocation to the Letters were ready and a committee of the Church Assembly was appointed to consider and report upon them. In 1921 this Committee presented its first report to the Assembly. The following year its final report was duly considered by that body and the revised Prayer Book, (Permissive Use) Measure introduced, and on January 31st, April 17th and April 26th respectively, passed by the Houses of Clergy, Bishops and Laity. In July and November of the same year Houses of Clergy and Laity, sitting separately in keeping with Article 14 of the Assembly's Constitution,¹ took the measure under careful advisement. In February of 1925, the revision stage of the Bill was completed in the Houses of Clergy, and in June in the Houses of Laity. The Revision Stage began in the House of Bishops in October of 1925, and after informal communication was effected with the Convocations and a separate meeting of the Lower House had considered the proposals, in March 1927 the Bishops concluded the Revision Stage of the measure. On March 29th and 30th the House of Bishops presented the Book in final form to the Convocations and Resolutions consenting to the measure being presented to the Assem-

¹It provided "that any Measure touching doctrinal formulae or the services or ceremonies of the Church of England or the administration of the Sacraments shall be debated & voted upon by each of the three Houses sitting separately, & shall then be either accepted or rejected by the Assembly in the terms in which it is finally proposed by the House of Bishops."

bly for final approval were passed.

Finally on July 6th the measure was approved by an overwhelming majority in the Church Assembly.¹ The vote by the Houses was:

	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Majority</u>
House of Bishops	34	4	30
House of Clergy	254	37	216
House of Laity	<u>230</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>138</u>
Aggregate vote	517	133	384

In October the approved measure was presented by the Legislative Committee of the Church Assembly to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament, and on November 22nd, the latter body having adjudged that the proposed changes in no way prejudiced constitutional rights, recommended that it go forward to Parliament. On December 12th His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury moved in the House of Lords:

That in accordance with the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act, 1919, this House do direct that the Prayer Book Measure 192- be presented to His Majesty for the Royal Assent.²

In a careful speech His Grace declared his conviction that the proposal did not constitute "any departure from the

¹For a Chronology on Prayer Book Revision see "Church Reform Papers, no 22; Prayer Book Revision. A Chronology," 1927, or more recently, "A Hundred Years of Church Self-Government History, 1830-1930," A Chronology, etc. by A. E. Gilchrist, London, 1931.

²"Parliamentary Debates," 5th ser., vol. LIX, col. 771.

principles of the Reformed Church of England,"¹ and proffered and answered three questions: first,

What adequate reasons have you for desiring a new or revised Book at all? Next, What do you regard as the outstanding differences between the rules of worship as surviving now and the rules of worship which will be ours if the measure received the Royal Assent? Thirdly, What good result or consequence do you expect to attain by passing this measure into law?²

In answering the first question His Grace explained that the problem of discipline and indiscipline which had agitated the Church in past decades arose from the fact that "The rules which had to be followed and obeyed - or disobeyed - by the ordinary parish priest or the ordinary bishop, were wholly out of date,"³ and that the Church

in the most official way that it could be summoned through Convocations, the Church Assembly and even "outside diocesan conferences" had spoken with an overwhelming majority in favour of going forward with this Measure.⁴

After twenty years "debating this matter up and down,"⁵ he declared,

the people who care about these matters and go to Church, who want to use their Prayer Book, who care about the form that Book should take, who understand the question and who are "the people really qualified to speak"⁶ have approved the measure.

In answer to the question concerning changes in the old Book,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., col. 773.

³Ibid., col. 776.

⁴Ibid., col. 779.

⁵Ibid., col. 780.

⁶Ibid., col. 778 f.

he noted the permission of enlarged liberty "under strict limitations," "as regards rubrics," "the use of the Athanasian Creed," "the power to shorten certain services," and "to use extempore prayer subject always to the permission of the Bishop." Additional "prayers for the King" and "prayers for present day needs, the Empire, the Colonies and their Parliaments, for industrial problems, for foreign missions, for the League of Nations"¹ and, in deference to the spirit which had issued from the wrecks of the war "prayers for the dead" were all provided. Slight changes in the choice of Biblical quotations were made also. A new devotional spirit, was apparent even among Nonconformists, and the new Book attempted to provide somewhat to meet "the aesthetic side of modes of conducting services or arranging for services,"² but this change did not betoken "any change of doctrine or any departure from Protestantism."³ The most profound change, he averred, related to the Holy Communion. His Grace added "I cannot go into such profound doctrines as the presence of our Lord, in argument on the floor of this House."⁴ The number of the celebrations of Communion had immensely increased, and there was need for more variety and abbreviation in the services. In addition he informed "a carefully restricted use of the

¹Ibid., col. 782.

²Ibid., col. 783.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

reservation of the consecrated elements for the sick" was provided. He had been hesitant about this provision at first but was now perfectly convinced "of a real and honest need in certain places" for it. In rare cases it was provided in the Church in Scotland and he thought the use in England would be rare. Every precaution had been made, he added, to prevent "abuses arising in regard to the reserved elements."¹ Reservation must not take place in any Church without the licence of the Bishop. The House of Laity had agreed to the insertion of a clause in the new Book favourable to restricted reservation, he added, if in the opinion of the Bishops it would "promote peace and order in the Church."² His Grace did not think that the new Book introduced "any change of doctrine in comparison with the old."³ In answering his third question, he affirmed his conviction that the new Book would mean a new spirit of loyalty among the clergy, for had not a deputation of Anglo-Catholic priests waited upon him and promised loyalty to the Deposited Book? Favourable testimony had come in from all over the land. Evangelicals had declared "Once the voice of the Church has spoken we shall fall into line with the rest."⁴ He was convinced that the new Book would enormously facilitate the work of the Bishops

¹Ibid., col. 786.

²Ibid., col. 787.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., col. 790.

and reduce a great mass of petty strifes.

Lord Hanworth rose to oppose a motion which, he declared, would provide for "an alternative Communion."¹ The Bishop of London, he affirmed, in 1915 had opposed an alternative use because it would obstruct his task of working his diocese, and he cited statements of the Bishops of Gloucester and Salisbury in supporting this view. Moreover, the new Book failed to safeguard that Prayers for the King, now too widely omitted, he said, and the Measure left the decision as to whether or not the new Book would be used to the minister or ultimately to the Bishop, not to the congregation. Clause 4 of the measure, he declared, would permit a Body of Archbishops and Bishops whose emphasis changes to "make and rescind at their discretion such rules as are required or authorised."² He feared the measure might mean imposing statutory loyalty to an alternative Prayer Book on some ministers holding different views. Citing statistics, he thought the representative character of the House of Laity "a fiction."³ When considering the votes of the parochial diocesan conference for the new Book, the overpowering influence of the Bishops and of Lord Hugh Cecil's eloquence must be remembered. He did not think discipline could be established

¹Ibid., col. 802.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., col. 803.

readily under a new Measure which failed to provide greater powers of enforcement, and reminded Their Lordships that 1,400 Catholic priests¹ had stated that they would not obey the new orders. He believed that the nation would hesitate "to allow things to take place for which they have no taste and have good grounds for distrusting."²

Earl Beauchamp supported the new Book as the *via media* between the extremists on both sides who opposed it. The Marquess of Lincolnshire, a confirmed Evangelical, opposed the Book uncompromisingly, and pleaded for a due regard for "the old tenets for which some of our forefathers fought and for which John Hampden died."³ The Earl of Denbigh, on behalf of "some forty Catholic Peers," announced that they would not vote on the issue and expressed his opinion that the House of Lords seemed an incongruous body to attempt to secure peace in religious circles "composed as it is of men of various religions, professed agnostics and free thinkers and others."⁴ Reminding Their Lordships of the sorry history of the effort to coerce clergymen by imprisonment and fine from High Church usages, Lord Phillimore declared his intention of supporting the Measure in the interest of "order through liberty instead

¹Ibid., col. 805.

²Ibid., col. 806.

³Ibid., col. 817.

⁴Ibid., col. 818.

of the present narrow construction and anarchy."¹ On motion of Earl Stanhope, the debate was adjourned to the following day. On December 13th and 14th it continued at wearying length.

Earl Stanhope, eager for a stricter enforcement of clergy discipline, moved an amendment to His Grace's motion:

That this House declines to proceed with Prayer Book measure 192- until it is accompanied by a Measure to ensure order and discipline in the Public Worship of the Church of England.²

Viscount Halifax, veteran champion of extreme Anglo-Catholics, reminded Their Lordships that coercion had been attempted before and that the things for which clergy had been imprisoned were "the things which the Deposited Book is now attempting to legalise."³ He could not vote against the measure because of his lasting regard for the Primates, nor could he vote for it because of these suggestions of "the necessity of coercion."⁴ He thought the Bishops ought to call conflicting sections of the Church together and attempt to bring peace among them. On behalf of laymen Lord Parmoor supported the motion, for he declared, that while he and the majority of laymen were satisfied with the present service of the Holy Communion, they wanted peace and unity and respected the judg-

¹Ibid., col. 826.

²Ibid., col. 831.

³Ibid., col. 842.

⁴Ibid., col. 846.

ment of the Bishops that the alternative ruling would further harmony within the Church. The Lord Bishop of Worcester opposed the Bill as absolutely undercutting "the basic purpose of the Reformation" and surrendering before the effort of extreme Anglo-Catholics led by "the aged and noble Viscount (Halifax)" to assimilate the Holy Communion once more to the Mass.¹ The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford agreed in the main with his colleague from Worcester. Lord Carson, a member of the Irish Church, rose to declare that this was the first time in his life that he

had ever felt grateful to Mr. Gladstone for disestablishing the Irish Church, and for this reason (he added) whatever your Parliament may do here in relation to the Prayer Book, it will not bind the Irish Church, which can still go on cherishing the precious heritage of the Reformation.²

He thought it unwise to legalise a Book which was "the product of the illegalities of the last thirty years."³ He was not persuaded that the desire for the measure was as widespread as painted by its promoters. There was a statement, he declared, from the Protestant Alliance, to which he had not seen any answer, that read:

303,673 adult communicant members of the Church of England of whom 2,638 are clergy, have signed a memorial to the House of Bishops protesting against the alternative Communion Services and reservation of the Sacrament.⁴

¹Ibid., col. 855.

²Ibid., col. 867.

³Ibid., col. 869.

⁴Ibid., col. 872.

The Bishop of Gloucester he noted

is reported to have written in "The Times" of November 15, 1922. . . that at least 90 per cent of the ordinary members of the Church of England would much prefer that there should be no alteration in the Prayer Book.¹

The question how far the vote of the Church Assembly represented the true mind of the nation or the Church was warmly debated. Lord Gorell declared that it represented "the overwhelming majority of the collective voice of the Church."² The Lord Bishop of Durham, supporting the measure, was convinced that it represented "the opinion of the communicants and the mass of Churchgoers."³ The Bishop of Norwich utterly disagreed.⁴ The opposition, the Bishop of Durham asserted, "to an astonishing degree" emanated from Ireland and Irishmen.⁵ The new Book sought to meet the new temper arising during the War and in post-War times he added, and sought to adjust the Prayer Book of a pre-scientific and pre-critical epoch more adequately to the views of modern times.

Lord Cushendon was convinced that the Assembly and diocesan conferences were utterly unrepresentative, "about as representative as were the Cornish boroughs before 1832, when half a dozen electors sent two members to Parliament." He quoted from "The Times":

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., col. 891.

³Ibid., col. 931.

⁴Ibid., col. 961-2.

⁵Ibid., col. 928.

In many parishes the names entered are fewer than the Easter communicants and it is not uncommon for the roll to contain less than one-thirtieth of the population.¹

"The whole aggregate numbers of those who voted in all the conferences put together," he urged, "only amounted to a negligible handful of the laity of the Church."²

In a lengthy speech the Lord Archbishop of York brought what he called "this long-drawn debate" to a conclusion. He declared that the Measure was emphatically the voice of the Church of England. Its revered leader, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had served twenty-five years in the Highest Office in the Communion with great distinction and was sponsor of the Bill, the Church Assembly was emphatically favourable and in thirty-three diocesan conferences 8,141 clerical and lay members had declared for the measure, only 1,890 against it. Moreover, Convocation had approved it, the clergy had voted by 236 to 32 and the Bishops by 38 to 4 for it.³ Indeed, he had authority for declaring that of the Free Churches only the Baptists and United Methodists "had officially advised that this Measure should be rejected by the Parliament."⁴ The great question at issue, he thought, was not whether the proposed changes were "consistent with what may vaguely be

¹Ibid., col. 940.

²Ibid., col. 940-1.

³Ibid., col. 971 & 979.

⁴Ibid., col. 972.

called Protestant principles," but whether they were "consistent with the doctrine of the Book of Common Prayer."¹ The great voice of the Church had expressed surety on that. He felt the new Book would increase loyalty and hence promote greater harmony in the Church. The legalising of an alternative Order of Holy Communion, Lord Cushendon's opinion to the contrary, "cannot be," he declared, "a sufficient reason for precipitating disestablishment."² He concluded with a stirring appeal to his hearers to liberate the Church from "this besetting discussion for the main work to which it is called."³

Their Lordships divided and the Primate's motion was passed by a vote of 241 to 88.⁴

In the House of Commons the Measure had a stormy and unsuccessful passage.

On December 15th the spectacular, and widely heralded debate opened. Mr. Bridgeman, in a brief speech, moved the resolution. He spoke, he announced, as "the man-in-the-pew." The measure he deemed was "an absolute necessity for the benefit of the Church."⁵ It was not an ill-considered scheme foisted upon Parliament, but was the result of years of pa-

¹Ibid., col. 978.

²Ibid., col. 983.

³Ibid., col. 984.

⁴Ibid., col. 986.

⁵Ibid., vol. CCXI, 5th Series, col. 2531.

tient investigation. Its purpose was to make the services of the National Church more conformable to modern times and to legalise certain essential changes. It would facilitate "action against extreme Anglo-Catholics or the more extreme sections than that."¹ The Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament, he added, had said that the revised Prayer Book maintained the character of the Book of 1662 and that "no change of doctrine of constitutional importance"² was involved. The Primate was of like opinion. The Measure was approved by overwhelming majorities in the Church Assembly, Convocation, and diocesan conferences. Opposition within the Church was only from extremists, "extreme Anglo-Catholics who do not wish to see their practices so much curtailed, and from the extreme Evangelicals, who think that they have not been curtailed enough."³ Strangely enough, he declared, "the protagonists against this Measure largely belong to the legal profession."⁴ The aim of the change was to make the services more conformable to modern times and would, in his opinion, promote better discipline.

Sir William Joynson-Hicks declared that Lord Parmoor, a great ecclesiastical lawyer, and the Lord Bishop of Worcester, contrary to the opinion of the Primate, had declared it

¹Ibid., col. 2533.

²Ibid., col. 2534.

³Ibid., col. 2536.

⁴Ibid.

their conviction that a change of doctrine was embodied in the new Book. Evangelicals like himself, and a vast number of humble laymen and laywomen throughout the country, he continued, who stood by the Protestant side of the Church, were strongly opposed to a change in, "of all others the service of Holy Communion" which would bring it nearer to the mediaeval ideas which were abolished by us at the time of the Reformation."¹ On the list of practices which the Report of the Royal Commission of 1906 specified as "on the Romeward side of the dividing line" was "Reservation of the Sacrament under conditions which led to its adoration,"² and the great issue before them was Reservation. The Measure provided for it "under conditions which will not permit of adoration."³ But he frankly believed that adoration would be greatly facilitated by the provision. He continued:

I will not discuss the niceties of Transubstantiation, but I say quite definitely to those who differ from me that if in Consecration there is a change, spiritual if you like, but a definite change by Act of Consecration, and if you reserve anywhere these Sacred Elements, which in your honest opinion have suffered a distinct change by the act of Consecration, then I agree that you are entitled to worship.

I cannot help saying that if an honest man believes there is a kind of sacred change, and I am not going into the niceties of it - which bring the body and blood of our Lord, if you like into the corporeal presence of bread and wine, and you reserve these in an Aumbry or Tabernacle, it

¹Ibid., col. 2541.

²Ibid., col. 2542.

³Ibid., col. 2543.

is difficult to say that you shall not worship, as thousands of men and women are doing to-day. We say that it is so much safer and better for the preservation of the true doctrines of the Church of England that Reservation should not be legalised or sanctioned, even though it is put in an Aumbry on the north side of the Chancel or in the Chapel.¹

Private prayer in the presence of the Reserved Sacrament, which he was told the bishops were going to permit, was "dangerously near private prayer to the Reserved Sacrament." For he added:

Unless there is in the hearts of the Anglo-Catholics or High Churchmen a belief in something more than the mere corporeal bread and wine, why should he wish to make his prayers in the presence of the Reserved Sacrament, why not in any part of the Church? Simply because he has been taught that there is something for him of benefit to him in the Reserved Sacrament.²

The Measure was a frank admission of the failure to check illegalities, he thought, and a concession to Anglo-Catholics. Had not the Bishop of London said recently "that the new Book gives the Anglo-Catholics all they have fought for for the last forty years."³ Because the Bishops have failed to enforce the law, he contended, they were being asked to change that law. He reminded Free Churchmen that this was a grave crisis on which they ought to vote.

Speaking as a Nonconformist, Mr. C. G. Ammon affirmed: "The question of Disestablishment has been brought immeasur-

¹Ibid., col. 2543-4.

²Ibid., col. 2545.

³Ibid.

ably nearer by the verdict which will be taken after this Debate." For he thought the House would not much longer tolerate "the holding up of other business" for questions which this Church, like other Church bodies, ought to be free to decide. His experience on the Ecclesiastical Committee, however, had convinced him that it was a duty to justice to support the Prayer Book Measure. The Committee had decided that no doctrine of constitutional importance was involved, and while a firm Protestant, he believed it. No minister would be compelled to use any other than the Book of Common Prayer, he added, and the new Book would reduce illegal practices. "The larger sections of the Free Churches," he thought, were "well disposed towards this Measure."¹

Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, a Scottish Presbyterian, declared that the question of the Real Presence was the central issue and the new Book in this respect represented a departure from the Reformed Protestantism faith. The question of the Real Presence was "the dividing line," which as Foxe's Book of Martyrs testified, divided Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer from the Roman position. In 1924 Bishop Gore and three thousand clergymen had affirmed their belief that by consecration the Bread and Wine became "the True Body and Blood of Christ." This he declared did not "maintain the Protestant Reformed

¹Ibid., col. 2558.

Tradition" but represented teaching which a rubric of the Prayer Book declared "to be idolatrous and abhorrent."¹ The new Book, he asserted, "breathes every concomitant of the principle" of Transubstantiation. This was no time for a Church to turn its back on three hundred years of Protestant teaching. He was compelled to oppose the measure.

The Countess of Iveagh assured the House that the Book would not stop illegalities; that the mass of moderate Churchmen were behind it, that it made the omission of Prayers for the King less easy and that while the Book was a compromise, she would support the Measure to promote unity and greater liberty.

Sir John Simon declared his intention to vote against the measure, in the interests of that "silent body of decent people who have continued to acquiesce in the Establishment of the Church of England upon the sole ground that it was a reformed Protestant Church."²

Lord H. Cecil pleaded with the House not to reject a Measure which, in the opinion of the overwhelming vote of the representatives of moderate Churchmen of every party, would be beneficial to it. The rejection, he predicted, would precipitate a "long, difficult and intricate controversy" over "rela-

¹Ibid., col. 2564.

²Ibid., col. 2572.

tions of Church and State."¹ And the position of the Church of England had never been to propound a single, narrow, clearly-defined doctrine that excluded all who did not accept it. In any case, the alternative Book emphatically condemned adoration of the Elements, and with the new Book legalised the Bishops would have a new possibility of enforcing discipline. Much of the slur of lawlessness, he thought, would be removed from the Church.

Sir Martin Conway found nothing in the new Book to meet the real "needs of the great mass of intelligent people."²

Sir H. Slessor, a staunch Anglo-Catholic, said that had he voted in the Church Assembly he would have voted against the Measure because of its restrictions on Reservation, but he would vote for it now because of his Anglo-Catholic belief in the Authority of the Church.

Mr. Walsh declared his refusal "to absolve the wrongdoers"³ of years gone by and of recent times by legalising their practices. He thought a vote against the Measure would be a vote against disruption in the Church of England.

Mr. Dunnico, a Free Churchman, declared it "would be a violation of the principles upon which Free Churches are based"⁴ to reject the Measure.

¹Ibid., col. 2578.

²Ibid., col. 2595.

³Ibid., col. 2604.

⁴Ibid., col. 2626.

The Prime Minister, in a careful speech, declared that while "born and baptized a member of the Church of England,"¹ he was independent, belonging to no party in the Church. He would put forward one question: "Which course taken by the House of Commons will serve best the religious life of our nation?"² He thought those who were not compelled by conscience ought to let the Church decide. And it had decided. To reject the Measure might mean chaos in the Church, and should a disestablishment issue project itself as a result, he feared that a sorry association of religion and politics would result to the nation's harm. Why not pass the Measure and ensure the blessing of comprehensiveness to the Church?

Sir Thomas Inskip raised the question how representative of the Church the vote of the Church courts had been. He doubted how completely it represented the mind of the laity.

Viscount Wolmer reiterated some of the arguments of supporters of the Measure and Mr. J. Jones brought the debate to a close with the terse comment:

I am not going to stop a vote being taken, but I want to say this on behalf of the great mass of the workers of this country, that they are more interested in the rent book than they are in the Prayer Book.³

The House divided and the motion was defeated by a

¹Ibid., col. 2633.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., col. 2652.

vote of 238 to 205.¹

Was ever in history a controversy calculated to raise more popular interest throughout the Anglo-Saxon world? The issue was drawn over the ever present cleavage between Protestant and Roman Catholic belief. The New Book had the overwhelming approval of the Church courts, diocesan, provincial, and national. Only four Bishops out of thirty-six had opposed it. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, highest ecclesiastical dignitaries in the land, were its eager sponsors. The House of Lords by a majority of three to one had approved it. Then, in a single spectacular debate, a House comprising men of every faith, Catholic, Protestant, Christian Scientist, Atheist, and even the Parsee Communist Shapurji Saklatvala, having weighed and sifted theological and ecclesiastical niceties, decisively vetoed what the Primate of all England had declared in the House of Lords was the result of thirty years of cumulative effort.

Parliament itself was frankly aroused. In recording the vote in the House of Lords the "Times" of December 15th declared: "The Division is by far the largest that has been

¹Ibid. The tellers reported incorrectly on the exact majority. Newspapers of Dec. 16th followed & on Dec. 17th had to correct their statements. Should not 230 in Hansard be 238? The vote was strictly non-party, viz.:

	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	Independent	Communist
For	166	34	2	3	-
Against	159	53	23	3	1

taken in the Upper House since the War." The "Daily Mail" of the same day was even more emphatic:

Not since the passing of the Parliament Act of 1911 has the House been so crowded. Peers utterly unfamiliar with the House, their faces almost unknown, crowded the habitues out of their accustomed places.

But interest in the Lower House was still greater. In reporting the decision of the members the "Times" of December 16 informed:

The result of the Division was guessed as the tellers took their places. In an instant members leapt upon the benches cheering and waving Order Papers, and a roar went up from the crowd at the bar.

In a headline the "Daily Mail" of the same date announced: "New Prayer Book Rejected - Primate in Tears." And later: "Division Scenes in Packed House, Archbishop of Canterbury a Motionless Spectator." Pictures of prominent debaters accompanied the account.

The "Evening Standard" was captioned "Primate's Appeal - Archbishop Pleads for Patience and Charity." Beneath His Grace's plea for prayers and patience on the part of all who recognised "the gravity of the situation" appeared a picture and a statement of Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, whom the paper declared had "largely turned the tide against the new Prayer Book." The Home Secretary declared in part:

I have always been convinced that the mass of the people were Protestant to the core. The Bishops have completely mistaken the views of the ordinary man in the pew. The decision is now clear and it is time for us all to work

together to consolidate the Church on the old lines, putting away the new doctrines of Anglo-Catholicism and wholeheartedly working with the great Nonconformist Churches for the good of the whole land.

And the London "Daily News" quoted the champion of the Evangelicals in a still stronger declaration: "I think the time has come for a definite split between the Anglo-Catholics and the Evangelicals. The two views cannot exist in the same Church." And again: "Lord Halifax, the Anglo-Catholic leader, is frankly striving for union with Rome and I am striving for union with the great Nonconformist Churches." The "Times" printed the entire debate of the House of Commons, and while admitting that the majority against the Measure was not large, declared that it was quite sufficient to wreck for the time being the work of Churchmen for nearly a quarter of a century. The "Daily Mail" asserted that the public interest was "so intense it had decided to publish the complete Division List." On the night of the debate the "Times" announced:

The Stations of the British Broadcasting Corporation are arranging to broadcast tonight the result of the division on the Measure and the Stations will be kept open if necessary until 1 p.m."

A traveller even discovered an announcement of the rejection of December 15th "on a flaring placard at the small seaside town of Mevagissey - in a remote part of Cornwall."¹

Interest in the issue spread far beyond the British

¹D.H.S. Cranage, "Church & State" in "The Nineteenth Century & After," Apr. 1928.

Isles. Although a great debate on tax reduction, in which the people were intimately concerned, had just concluded in the American Congress, the "New York Times" of December 16th devoted the central column of its front page to the news of the Prayer Book rejection. The debate had stirred in the British Commons, it declared, "a depth of feeling not seen since the declaration of war in 1914."

The "New York World" was at a loss to discover that a Church "in matters of ritual and dogma" should be under control of a body which, it asserted, included "Church of England members, Roman Catholics, Nonconformists of various denominations, Jews, and even Mohammedans." It continued: "It is an anomaly difficult for Americans wedded to the principle of separation of Church and State to account for." The "Brooklyn Eagle" declared: "Once more the fact is demonstrated that England, and consequently the Empire, are Protestant if not Puritan." The "Philadelphia Enquirer" commented tersely: "In England an Established Church is becoming more and more an anachronism," and cleverly added:

It must be intolerable to many English Churchmen that Sir William Joynson Hicks, popularly known as "Jix", should have more power in such a matter as Prayer Book revision than the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A front page headline of the Chicago "Daily Tribune" of December 16th announced: "New Prayer Book Killed in Commons," and a dramatic picture followed of "the aged Archbishop

of Canterbury, Primate of all England, looking mutely down upon the scene which meant desolation for his most cherished hopes."

Canadians were interested. The Toronto "Globe" of December 16th in a careful rather lengthy account, found occasion to refer even to the Archbishop's "shaggy eyebrows."

In distant Australia the Sydney "Morning Herald" of December 17th placed the news of the debate first on its summary and allotted the subject two complete columns. The effect of the adoption of the new Book, it declared, "would be not only felt by the direct adherents of the Church of England, but its repercussions might very well affect the nerves of the nation and the future of the constitution." In an editorial comment it declared: "The result of the debate is a striking example of the fate which so often overtakes compromises."

Leading periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic were quick to fan the public interest. But the articles are too numerous to record here.¹

¹For examples of articles on the issue before & after the debate see: "Nineteenth Century & After," July, Nov. & Dec. 1927, Feb., March & Apr. 1928; "Contemporary Review," Nov. 1927 & March 1928; "Atlantic Monthly," Nov. 1927; "Literary Digest," March 19 and Dec. 31, 1927, Jan. 7 & July 7, 1928; "Independent," Dec. 3, 1927; "British Weekly," Jan. 26, 1928; "Living Age," Feb. 1, 1928; "Fortnightly Review," Feb. 1928; "Quarterly Review," Apr. 1928; "The New Republic," Aug. 1, 1928.

The preponderate mass of active English Churchmen no doubt favoured the motion. Lord Birkenhead, as the New York "Times" declared, thought that the speeches against the new Book could have been answered by a schoolboy, and characterised the decision as "hysterical". The Dean of Winchester wrote that "Several of the speeches in the House of Commons appeared to oscillate between ignorance and hysteria."¹

Extreme High Churchmen like Lord Halifax and the fourteen hundred High Anglican clergymen who, fearing the use of coercion under the new Book had declared their unwillingness to abide by its rulings were unfavourable. Lord Halifax was reported, however, in the "Times" of December 11th to have said that

He believed that if Sir W. Joynson Hicks, Sir T. Inskip and himself were shut up together in a room for a week they would without much difficulty come to an understanding and agreement.

Extreme Evangelicals like the Lord Bishop of Norwich, Sir William Joynson Hicks, and a considerable body of laymen, were openly opposed to the proposed measure. In a letter to the editor of the "Times" of December 17, 1927, one of their number expressed their position clearly. It was not a matter of the present Bishops enforcing the new rules rigidly, but the

¹"Nineteenth Century & After," Feb. 1928.

responsibility was too great for Parliament to allow unborn or even prospective Bishops to have the latitude as to rubrics and rules for which those of to-day ask and no doubt in all sincerity intend to administer.

In the "Times" of January 28th the Bishop of Ripon declared:

The laity (in the Assembly) contented themselves with stating their willingness to accept a measure of Reservation for the sick only if, in the opinion of the Bishops, this would make for peace and order in the Church. They had no opportunity of discussing the bishops' proposals save when they could only reject them by rejecting the measure as a whole.

In an article in the "Fortnightly Review" of February 1928 subtly prefaced, "Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment," Mr. Maurice Wood expressed the opinion of a goodly number of the rank and file of Englishmen:

Nothing like the proposed Prayer Book will ever go through the House of Commons unless it is accompanied by a Discipline Bill. There was a chance of slipping the revised Book through Parliament in 1927, as the Enabling Act was slipped through in 1921¹ sub silentio, so long as nobody understood what the measure meant, but that chance has now gone forever. The interest of the average laymen has been aroused, and he will follow the matter to its conclusion. That conclusion is that the Church can conform to the established rules of the game as an Established Church, or that it can go outside them by seeking Disestablishment. What the Church will not be allowed to do is to retain all the official privileges and emoluments of an Establishment while organising itself on the basis of a Methodist or Baptist Body in which a number of ministers and "pious laymen" and subscribers really dictate the policy of the religious body.

¹Should be 1919.

Nonconformity as a whole definitely opposed the Measure. A group of able and learned dissenters like Dr. Carnegie Simpson of the Presbyterians, Drs. Garvie and Selbie of the Congregationalists and Dr. Scott Lidgett of the Wesleyans, it is true, were favourable. In the "Methodist Times" of October 13th appeared a frank statement:

Free Churchmen, as a whole, desire for the Anglican Church like liberty as they themselves possess. They believe the Deposited Book, fairly used and interpreted will be an instrument for peace.

In the "Times" Drs. Garvie and Selbie wrote sympathetically, while Dr. Scott Lidgett, in the "Review of the Churches" of April 27th, speaking of the efforts of the Archbishops and Bishops, expressed "admiration of their skill" and hope for their success.

But the mass of dissenting opinion was in distinct opposition. Speaking in 1928 when the issue was again under debate in the House of Commons, Mr. George Thorne announced to the members that he had just received a cablegram from Dr. J. D. Jones and Dr. Sidney Berry, who were at the time heading a Congregational pilgrimage to America. It read:

Dr. J. D. Jones and Dr. Berry desire to state that Dr. Selbie's letter to the "Times" and his speech to Nonconformist M.P.'s in support of the revised Prayer Book represent a purely personal position. It not only does not represent Congregationalism, but flatly contradicts the considered judgment of the denomination as expressed in the resolution passed by the Congregational Union Assembly in May. Dr. Jones and Dr. Berry are anxious that the position of Congregationalism should not again be misrepresented in Parliament.

In addition Mr. Thorne read from a letter of Mr. Aubrey, the Secretary of the Baptist Union:

The great point to impress is that the few Free Churchmen who have written to the "Times" represent hardly anybody but themselves. The Federal Council of Free Churches, the Free Church Council, the Congregational Union, the Baptists and other Free Church bodies have all passed resolutions opposing the Book that allows of Reservation. The overwhelming mass of Free Church opinion is against it and the members of Parliament ought to be in no sort of doubt about that.¹

The Liberation Society as might be expected, was alive to the situation. In a carefully worded letter to Members of Parliament on December 6, 1927, the Executive Committee pledged its unswerving allegiance to the principle of "complete religious liberty and equality. . .on the ground of social justice, that no person and no section of the community should be favoured or disfavoured on account of religious belief or opinion," stated that the Disestablishment issue was once again raised, and urged members of Parliament "to vote against the Prayer Book Measure, and thus to place upon the Church itself the responsibility of finding the means by which its ritual can (could) be brought into harmony with its religious instincts and convictions."

A violent and abusive wing of Nonconformity waged a reprehensible fight against the measure. As a sample of its scurrilous literary attack the Bishop of Durham read in the

¹"Parliamentary Debates," 5th Series, vol. CCXVIII, cols. 1228-9.

House of Lords during the debate on December 14th, an extract from one of a bundle of documents he held in his hand:

The anti-Protestant Prayer Book, fathered by the silly Archbishop of Canterbury and the pompous and swelled-headed Archbishop of York...and the renegade Bishops, is an insult to the common sense of the nation. If these dishonest Romanisers who take the pay of the Protestant Reformed Church of England are so in love with the Popish Antichrist, why do they not go over to Rome? In 1662, 2,000 of our glorious Puritan forefathers for conscience sake, left the Church and became Nonconformists. They were honest men. Anglo-Catholicism is roguery, rascality and lying, it is Jesuitism. Prayer for the dead means the introduction of Purgatory.¹

Perhaps Dr. Carnegie Simpson in the "British Weekly" of January 26th offered the weightiest criticism of any Nonconformist when he wrote:

The root mistake which has been made has been, I think, that the revision has all through been directed under the aim of placating all parties within the Church rather than under the aim of expressing the true and fundamental character of the nation's religious life.

The new Book embodied many changes eliminating certain anathemas, deleting the word "obey" from the marriage ceremony and substituting "share" for "endow", permitting extempore prayer subject to the Bishop's directions, making the Athanasian Creed permissive, providing three alternate prayers for the dead and in the office of infant baptism altering "born in sin" to the declaration that "God willeth all men to be saved, for God is love." In all probability the House of

¹Ibid., Vol. LXIX, col. 925.

Commons would have approved all these changes gladly, had not an alternative order for the communion of the sick permitting Reservation of the Sacrament been included. As the Bishop of Durham declared in his masterful vindication of the Measure in the House of Lords: "All the serious objections to the Revised Book have to do with Holy Communion."¹

The gist of the matter can be stated summarily. The representatives of the British people refused to recognise as National a Church which in this approval of Reservation represented so small a proportion of the sentiment and desire of the entire nation. After seven years of pseudo self-government, the Church's alternative, temporarily at least, was surrender or disestablishment. Of course, for a time the Church might play the part of an imperium in imperio, and put the opinion of its courts before the express command of the courts of the nation. But as the Archbishop of York said concerning that procedure on February 5, 1930, "It is morally indefensible unless we are at the same time setting our hands to deal with the situation which creates the problem."²

That the Bishops' attempt at further revision ended in dismal failure is notorious. On February 5, 1928, they introduced the Prayer Book Measure Number 2 into the Church Assembly and on April 27th that Body gave its overwhelming

¹Ibid., col. 932.

²"Church & State," London, 1930, p. 12.

approval.¹ But on June 14, 1928 in a vote of 266 to 220, the representatives of the people spoke more emphatically than before. To follow the debate in the House of Commons in 1928 is unnecessary. More than once from the zealots of Protestantism in Parliament were heard the stirring words: "Play the man, Master Ridley. We shall this day light such a candle in England as by God's Grace shall not be put out." Once again the Church discovered that the road to real freedom was blocked. In the most intimate concerns of the spiritual realm, doctrines, beliefs, even the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, she was bound irrevocably to the secular arm. Was it the price of establishment?

Churchmen acted quickly. The Bishops hastened into conclave and agreed on the necessity of consulting their clergy in synod and the lay Houses of the Diocesan Conferences. It was clear they were not disposed to observe the ruling of the House of Commons too scrupulously, and were to call upon the Church courts to approve their laxity in this respect. As the official Year Book of 1929 cautiously put it:

Generally they asked the clergy to say whether they would support the Bishops if they took the standard of the 1928

1Vote by House was as follows:

House of Bishops	32	2
House of Clergy	183	59
House of Laity	181	92
	396	153

Official Year Book 1929, p. 140.

Book as an interpretation of the extent of the departures from the 1662 Book in respect of which they would take no repressive action even if they were not in favour of them.¹

In fewer words they would tolerate, although illegal, the use of services as outlined in the rejected Book. In addition they arranged through the Central Board of Finance for the publication of the 1928 Book, and it was placed upon the market in December, prefaced by a strategic but unheroic explanatory note announcing that publication was not intended to imply either directly or indirectly that the Book was authorised for use in Churches. The result is patent. As Viscount Wolmer put it, the Church "is making use of the new Prayer Book without parliamentary permission." The Viscount, great champion of the spiritual independence of the Church, added, "To do anything else would have been to abdicate her position as a teaching Church, to betray her divine commission and to confess her spiritual bankruptcy."²

One living beyond the borders of Great Britain cannot read with full sympathy the open record of a Church accepting for three full years National recognition, with the privileges, responsibilities, and emoluments which that brings, while at the same time she openly defies the law of that nation twice expressly declared by the representatives of its

¹p. IV.

²Church Self-Government Pamphlet No. 39, p. 5.

people. But moderate Churchmen caution against too harsh judgment. The Bishops, they insist, were assaying a task more trying and difficult than that facing any other religious group, namely, to keep Catholicism and Evangelicalism in one community. Having accepted the "complexio oppositorum," with the immeasurable strain involved, after years of patient planning they had evolved a scheme which they were convinced would minister to the great end of comprehension. With laudable care they had submitted it to the Church Courts and the House of Lords and in each case it had received overwhelming support. A majority of English members of the House of Commons had favoured it. But Presbyterians of Scotland and Northern Ireland, unlike English Churchmen who had scrupulously refrained from interfering in Scottish religious matters, were unwilling to be silent. As was averred again and again after the debate, the Irish, Scotch and Welsh members of the Lower House of Parliament defeated the Measure. And strangely enough the alternative Communion Service which furnished the principal ground of their opposition was virtually that of the American Episcopal Church adopted by it in the Protestant eighteenth century. In spite of the action of the House of Commons, the Bishops have refused to abandon the great ideal of a National Church comprehensive enough to hold Catholicism and Evangelicalism in one community. In consequence, they purpose to keep the 1662 Book as the legal stan-

ard but to measure the inevitable divergences in public worship by the rejected Book of 1927-1928.¹

On July 2, 1928, not three weeks after the decision of the government on the Prayer Book measure had been announced, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury made his celebrated statement before the Church Assembly which, in the form of a resolution, was unanimously adopted by that body:

It is a fundamental principle that the Church - that is, the Bishops, together with the Clergy and Laity - must in the last resort, when its mind has been fully ascertained, retain its inalienable right in loyalty to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to formulate its Faith in Him and to arrange the expression of that Holy Faith in its forms of worship. . . It is our firm hope that, when the facts have been fully considered, some strong and capable committee of Statesmen and Churchmen may be appointed to weigh afresh the provisions of the existing law in order to see whether any readjustment is required for the maintenance in the conditions of our own age of the principle which we have here and now asserted.

On November 12th His Grace resigned his See and was succeeded by Dr. Cosmo Lang, formerly Archbishop of York. In October 1929 the new Archbishop of Canterbury made a statement confirming his predecessor's position and urging that a Commission on Church and State be appointed.

On February 5, 1930, Dr. Temple, Archbishop of York, citing the expression of Archbishop Davidson of February 5, 1930, moved in the Church Assembly:

¹This explanation the author has received in interviews with representative moderate Churchmen and in personal letters from two of their number.

It is desirable that a Commission should be appointed to enquire into the present relations of Church and State, and particularly how far the principle stated above (Archbishop Davidson's declaration) is able to receive effective application in present circumstances in the Church of England and what legal and constitutional changes, if any, are needed in order to maintain or to secure its effective application; and that the Archbishops be requested to appoint a Commission for the purpose.¹

The Northern Primate reminded the Assembly that the terms of the Resolution were accepted for presentation to the Assembly by the House of Bishops "without any dissentient voice." He declared that it was "radically bad for any society to conduct its life in uncertain relationship to the law which is supposed to govern it,"² that while he believed the course taken by the Bishops formally and publicly was right and inevitable, he could not but add: "I also believe that it is morally indefensible unless we are at the same time setting our hands to deal with the situation which creates the problem."³ That situation he was convinced went deeper than the Prayer Book issue. However, the rejection of 1927 and 1928, he asserted,

has thrown a new light upon the situation in which we stand and has made impossible the continuance of any advance with those reforms for which this Assembly was primarily established, we should review the whole field again and try to see all these matters in due proportion and perspective, and, as a result of that fresh survey,

¹The text of the motion and speech is printed separately, London, 1930.

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 12.

fashion a new policy.¹

He had seen more reason for valuing what is called Establishment, he announced, than when the Life and Liberty movement calling for self-government at any cost had been organised. He added:

While I still consider that spiritual independence is so essential that the price of disestablishment would not be too great to pay if it really appears that there is no means of securing independence, yet we must search long and carefully before we decide, that that price has got to be paid.²

The Scottish example, he thought, would bear examining. Some way out might well be found.

The Bishop of Winchester seconded the resolution, and after a day's debate, it was adopted by an overwhelming vote in the Church Assembly.³

Not until February 1931 was the Commission finally appointed and the date of 1931 sittings subsequently set for March 12th, 13th and 14th, July 28th, 29th and 30th, and December 15th, 16th and 17th. With Viscount Cecil of Chelwood as Chairman, the personnel comprises the Archbishop of York

¹Ibid., p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 19.

³The voting by Houses was:

	For	Against
Bishops	33	1
Clergy	198	38
Laity	151	66
Total	382	105

Year Book 1930, p. 150.

and a knot of able ecclesiastics, and the Earl of Selbourne and a group of distinguished and capable laymen.

The findings of the new commission thus far are not made public. A leading Bishop opines that such a body should want five years for investigation. But will five years be sufficient to settle a conflict which has existed ever since Henry VIII, eager for a new wife, undertook the Reformation of the Church in England?

Summary

From the formation of Provincial Houses of Laymen in 1886 and 1891 respectively, the movement for the creation of a system of autonomous Church Courts slowly gathered strength, and resulted in 1905 in the organisation of a Representative Church Council comprising Houses of Bishops, Clergy, and Laymen, but with no statutory powers. In 1916 a Committee on Church and State was appointed which advised a petition to Parliament for statutory powers subject to Parliamentary veto. The Representative Church Council weighed the matter and after some revisions in the plan it was presented to and approved by Parliament in the celebrated Enabling Act. The National Assembly thus created ran smoothly and seemed to be a fulfillment of the desire for autonomy until in 1926 two Measures of the new Assembly were vetoed by the House of

Commons and in 1927 and 1928 the cherished revised Prayer Book was decisively rejected. In 1930 advocates of autonomy within the Church, hoping to erect from the broken pieces a new structure, appointed a Commission on Church and State. It has not yet reported.

